Montana Department of Military Affairs

Disaster & Emergency Services Division State Emergency Coordination Center

1900 Williams Street - P.O. Box 4789 Helena, MT 59604-4789 Telephone: (406) 841-3911 Fax: (406) 841-3965

Situation Report for August 1, 2003 (issued @ 14:00 hrs.)

Wildfires of 2003

Attention * - New information shown in today's report displayed in **Bold Italics** type.

I. - <u>Background Information</u>:

• Fire activity throughout the state continues to generate concern on the part of many Montana citizens and lots of work for local government officials. High ridge temperatures, drying conditions, and possibly thunderstorms later in the week may create a substantial increase in fire activity. Fire managers believe a shift to these conditions could easily create a long summer siege.

II. - Current Montana Fire Conditions: (as reported to NRCC July 30, 2003 (2300))

Light initial attack – 37 new fires for 8,970 acres

- Flathead Area Command (Mann) is managing the large fires on the Flathead National Forest, Kootenai National Forest and Glacier National Park.
 - Robert Type 1 Incident Management Team (Stam), 19,000 acres, 5% contained, 8 miles N of Columbia Falls, Montana.
 - Wedge Canyon Type 1 Incident Management Team (Bennett), 22,000 acres, 30% contained, 20 miles E of Eureka, Montana.
 - Trapper Creek Complex Type 1 Incident Management Team (Raley).

 Complex is 19,000 acres, 35% contained. This Complex is made up of the

 Trapper Creek (15,200 acres 25% contained), Paul Bunyan (300 acres –

 100% contained) and Wolf Gun (3,500 acres 35% contained) fires located 45

 statute miles NE of Kalispell, MT.
 - Ross Creek Type 2 Incident Management Team (Sandman), 195 acres, 80% contained, 20 air miles SW of Troy, Montana. Containment expected 8/2/03.
- Black Frog Complex Type 1 Incident Management Team (Frye), 40% contained. This Complex is made up of the Blackwall fire (4,442 acres), located 32 miles N of Salmon, Idaho and Frog Pond (2,091 acres), as well as numerous concentrations of spots on both fires for a total of 7,500 acres located 34 miles S of Hamilton, Montana.

- Hidden Lake Type 2 Incident Management Team (Chrisman), 3,500 acres, 80% contained, 30 miles W of Dillon, Montana. Containment expected 8/2/03.
- Big Creek 1,339 acres, 80% contained, 4 miles NW of Victor, Montana.
- Little Salmon Creek Complex This 3,086 acre lightning caused Wildland Fire Use complex is located 47 miles SE of Kalispell, Montana in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This complex, made up of the Pagoda (125 acres) and the Little Salmon (2,961 acres), is being managed to accomplish resource objectives.

STATE FORECAST FOR MONTANA
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE GREAT FALLS MT
430 AM MDT FRI AUG 1 2003

WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

Today - Mostly Sunny. Highs 93 To 103.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Lows 49 To 59.

Saturday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Afternoon Showers And Thunderstorms. Highs 90 To 100.

CENTRAL MONTANA

Today - Mostly Sunny. Highs In The Lower 80s To Lower 90s.

Tonight - Mostly Clear. Lows In The Mid 50s To Lower 60s.

Saturday - Partly Cloudy. Highs In The Mid 80s To Mid 90s.

SOUTHWEST MONTANA

Today - Mostly Sunny. Highs In The Mid 70s To Lower 90s.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Lows In The Lower To Mid 50s.

Saturday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Afternoon. Highs In The Mid 70s To Upper 80s.

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN MONTANA

Today - Partly Cloudy. Highs From 85 To 95.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. A Chance Of Thunderstorms East. Lows From 55 To 65.

Saturday - Partly Cloudy. Chance Of Afternoon Thunderstorms Southwest. Highs From 85 To 95.

III. - Summary of Actions being taken by Local Government Officials:

Local government resources from various jurisdictions have been actively engaged in fire fighting efforts, particularly during the past several days. The evacuation of residents whose properties have been threatened have been conducted as required.

Local Emergency and Disaster Declarations Date Filed Emergency Declaration (Box Canyon/Long Mtn.) **Cascade County** 7/15/03 Garfield County Disaster Declaration (Missouri Breaks) 7/15/03 **Beaverhead County** Emergency Resolution (multiple fires) 7/17/03 Ravalli County Emergency Declaration (Big Creek) 7/20/03 Flathead County Emergency Declaration (Wedge Canyon) 7/21/03 Sanders County Resolution (Level II Fire Restrictions) 7/29/03

IV. - Summary of State Activities and Resources Committed:

State Declaration:

On 7/18/03, Governor Judy Martz signed an Executive Order (# 14-03) in which she declared a statewide emergency thereby enabling mobilization of state resources (including the Montana National Guard) should they be needed to help protect the life, health and/or property of Montana's citizens.

FEMA Declarations:

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on July 23rd, 2003 for Missouri Breaks Complex fire.

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on July 25th, 2003 for Flathead County's Wedge Canyon and Roberts fires.

Requests for State Assistance:

- The Montana National Guard is assisting "initial attack" fire suppression operations by supplying 3 UH-60 (Blackhawk) Helicopters modules and one UH-1 Helicopter module and approximately 51 soldiers. One Blackhawk helicopter module is currently assigned to the Flathead Interagency Dispatch Center, another is assigned to the Helena Interagency Dispatch Center, and the third is assigned to Missoula. The UH-1 helicopter module is currently deployed to Billings. The Montana National Guard Personnel Resources currently allocated to wild land fire suppression duties stands at 51. The National Guard is rotating in new air crews in Helena and Kalispell this weekend.
- One NG Liaison Officer has been assigned to the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NGCC) in Missoula.
- · MT Highway Patrol and MT Department of Transportation are supporting fire efforts with local jurisdictions and fire management to limit travel disturbances.

Status of State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

- Montana DES is providing support to local governments through the State Emergency Coordination Center in Helena. The SECC is currently operating at Activation Level III. Level III operations include a full staff 0800-1700 during weekdays with a duty officer on call after hours . Weekend operations will be staffed at Level II from 0800-1700 unless it becomes necessary to advance to a higher activation level.
 - The State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC) will continue to monitor conditions and is prepared to provide 24-hour incident support to local governments. After office hours (i.e., 1700-0700) support is available through the DES Duty Officer who may be reached at (406) 841-3911.

Addendums to Situation Report As of: August 1st, 2003

Road Closures: Information is current as of 07-29-03

Southwest

U.S. 93, from Gibbonsville, Idaho, to the Montana state line will now be open 24 hours a day. Pilot cars will continue to escort traffic from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., so motorists should expect delays during this period. Highway 93 north into Montana continues to be open without restrictions, as is Montana Highway 43 between Lost Trail Pass and Wisdom. Forest Service officials have closed the Gibbonsville Road from where it enters the Salmon-Challis National Forest to where it leaves the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. Highway 43 is now open 24 hours a day from Lost Trail Pass to Wisdom. The Salmon River Road has now has been cleared to allow one lane passage. The Panther Creek Road is impassable near Panther Creek's confluence with the Salmon River due to landslides.

Northwest

The Wedge Canyon fire, 6-miles south of the Canadian boarder, and the Robert fire, between Coram and West Glacier, are actively requiring the continued closure of Secondary 486 to all but essential traffic. *The* Goingto-the-Sun Road is closed from West Glacier to Logan Pass, due to fires. Logan Pass remains open, but the only access is from the east side of the park. Highway 2 on the south boundary of Glacier provides access to the east side of the park. The Inside North Fork Road (north and south of Polebridge) is open from Fish Creek to Big Prairie, just north of Polebridge, but is closed from Big Prairie north.

Reported Major Fire Activity: Report Date: Jul 30, 2003 1800 hrs

Black Frog Complex:

Residences threatened: 87 Commercial Property: 9 Outbuildings/Other: 211

Estimated Cost: \$6,500,000 % contained: 40%

Robert Fire:

Residences threatened: 200 Commercial Property: 24 Outbuildings/Other: 36

Estimated Cost: \$\$4,400,000 % contained: 5%

Wedge Canyon:

Residences threatened: 100 Commercial Property: 0 Outbuildings/Other: 23

Estimated Cost: \$8,200,000 % contained: 25 %

Trapper Creek Complex:

Residences threatened: Commercial Property: 3 Outbuildings/Other: 4

Estimated Cost: 703,000 % contained: 35 %

Ross Creek:

Residences threatened: 0 Commercial Property: 0 Outbuildings/Other: 0

Estimated Cost: \$1,888 210 % contained: 80%

Little Salmon Complex

Residences threatened: 1 Commercial Property: 0 Outbuildings/Other: 1

Estimated Cost: \$25,000 % contained: NR%

Hidden Lake:

Residences threatened: 0 Commercial Property: 0 Outbuildings/Other: 0

Estimated Cost: \$2,300,000 % contained: 80%

Big Creek:

Residences threatened: 0 Commercial Property: 0 Outbuildings/Other: 0

Estimated Cost: \$ NR % contained: 80%

Current DES Situation Report From Flathead Area Command:

Wildfires in Glacier have caused the need for the evacuation of west Glacier and Apgar. There are approximately 250 homes in the area. The local Red Cross chapter has established a shelter in White Fish at the North Valley Hospital Basement.

Fire Restrictions and Closures

<u>Zone</u>	Restrictions	Effective Date
Northwestern Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Southwestern Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Central Montana Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
South Central Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Eastern Montana Zona		

Eastern Montana Zone

Stage I Restrictions (Billings)

July 18, 2003

Stage II Restrictions

State & Private: Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass counties July 25, 2003

Federal: Treasure, Musselshell, Bighorn, Yellowstone July 18, 2003 Stage I Restrictions (Lewistown) July 21, 2003

Stage II Restrictions

State & Private: Liberty County

Federal: Chouteau, Fergus, Judith Basin, Wheatland
Stage I Restrictions (Miles City)

July 25, 2003

July 26, 2003

General Fire Information and Severity to Date

- Plum Creek has closed all private and public use on their holdings, logging operations are also shut down
- > Beaverhead and Deerlodge National Forest have currently Plume Dominated Fire Conditions and are expected to continue for the next few days
- ➤ Energy Release Component Lincoln Ranger District reports component same as 1988 when the Canyon Creek Fire started

Helena reports component is 14 points higher than when the Cave Gulch Fire started in 2000

NW Area command

Burnout initiated by fire mgt on the Roberts and Wedge Canyon have proven successful to date

- ➤ General Cost for fires under Northern Rockies Coordination and acreage total [from Northern Rockies Priorities List -acreage estimate on active fires]
- Cost: \$25 million Acreage: 67241
- Many campgrounds and areas of Glacier National Park remain closed. Many Glacier, St. Mary, and Goat Haunt areas of the park remain open. Also the backcountry in the Belly River area of the park is still accessible. For more information on Glacier consult: http://www.nps.gov/glac/whatsnew/recupd.htm

Web Links:

Glacier National Park Fire Management: http://www.nps.gov/glac/resources/fires.htm

Northern Rockies Interagency Information Center http://fs.fed.us/r1/fire/2003fires/index.htm

Priority	Incident Name	Team	Critical Needs	Resources Threatened	Comments
1	IA				
2	Northwest Area Command - Robert - Wedge Canyon - Trapper Cr. Complex - Ross Creek	Mann (Area Command)	•	•	 Active burning on all fires, however, predicted strong winds did not materialize Not responsible for IA on the Kootenai NF and in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Little Salmon Complex not under Area Command Cost Team arrived
	Robert Flathead National Forest 14,500 acres	Stam (T1) Total Personnel: 903	■ DOZB (2) ■ DIVS (2) ■ TFLD (3) ■ STCR (3) ■ STEN (3)	 Apgar Village, Park Headquarters, North Fork Canyon, Apgar Communication site & lookout in 12 hour threatened timeframe Lake McDonald homesites, W Glacier townsite, Lake McDonald Hotel and recreation sites in 24-and 48-hour threatened time frame North and Middle Fork flathead River residences and timber lands west toward Whitefish in 72-hour threatened time frame 	 5% contained Heavy smoke inversion impeded firing operation on right flank Hand & aerial firing utilized to continue firing operation to tie lines together before predicted west winds arrive Line on left flank continues to be held, burned out and improved Camas Rd. burnout in Division S went well reaching McDonald Creek Burnout in Division E also accomplished in Canyon Creek Evacuation remains in place for West Glacier, Blankenship Rd. and GNP HQ – however, some employees are being allowed to return to GNP Headquarters
	Wedge Canyon Flathead National Forest 21,374 acres	Bennett (T1) Total Personnel: 1,051	■ T1 Crews	 Trail Creek area residents (12 hr threatened time frame) Whale Creek Residents along North Fork Rd (12 hr threatened time frame) Kintla Campground (24 hr threatened time frame) 100 residences Class 1 Airshed Timber, Recreation, Fisheries 	 25% contained Good progress underway in Division Z on SW flank FLE being used to prevent fire spread to west above Whale Creek Rd. Feller bunchers working Trail Creek Rd. reinforcing secondary line on north side in divisions A & B Community meetings scheduled again with evacuated residences Thursday Injury 7/30/03: broken wrist

Northern Rockies Priorities

July 31, 2003 (1600) – August 1, 2003 (1600)

			Trational Trepareditess i		
				■ Wild & scenic river corridor	 One additional structure discovered burned from fire blowup on 7/25/03 Lack of T1 crews preventing anchoring fire on north flank
	Trapper Creek Complex Glacier National Park 18,600 acres Trapper – 15,000 (25% contained) Wolf Gun – 3,300 (35% contained) Paul Bunyan – 300 (100% contained)	Raley (T1) Total Personnel: 197	 T1 Crews T1 Heli T2 Crews 	 Granite Park Chalet National Historic Landmark Several other cabins on the National Register of Historic Structures Significant cultural resource sites Many Glacier developed area 	 35% containment Ground fire with torching and spotting Handline and helicopters preventing fire from developing runs IMT developing cooperative suppression and contingency plans with Canadian Park Service Trapper Ck spreading east and south and northwest Wolf Gun spreading north and south Paul Bunyan – no spread Many Glacier area reopened to visitors, however, trails remain closed
	Ross Creek Kootenai NF 195 acres	Sandman (T2) Total Personnel: 428	T1 crewsMisc OH	Ross Creek Cedar Scenic Area Campground; residences near Hwy 56 & Bull Lake in 72 hour threatened time frame	 70 % containment Ross Creek Trail remains closed to public Continue pursuit of Cost Share Agreement between Lincoln County and Kootenai NF Proposed trail construction option up Ross Creek to reduce use of helicopters for crew transport Minor injuries to date Remote, ugly country
3	Hunt Creek IDL - Priest Lake Area Office 475 acres	Kechter (T2) Total Personnel: 347	 1 T1 crew and 4 T2 crews T3 heli and module Vehicles for transport 	 Endowment commercial timber Grizzly Bear, Woodland Caribou and Bull trout habitat Selkirk Scenic Area 	 25% containment Significant progress made on lines to N and W sides of fire; fire growth to east was more active due to weather Fire is reaching Hunt Creek with possibility of crossing & reaching heavy slash fuel source Potential future threat to human life/safety primarily a result of

Toboggan Idabo Pathandle NF 12 nautical miles NE of Wallace, ID 200 acres Slims Slims Nez Perce NF 6,000 acres Benes (T2) Total Personnel: 499 Benes (T2) Total Personnel: 499 Back Frog Complex Total Personnel: 499 Black Frog Complex Slims Black Frog Complex Five (T1) Black Frog Complex Five		National Preparedness Level = 5					
Solims Benes (T2) Total Personnel: 499 Total Personnel: 499 Total Personnel: 499 Total Personnel: 499 Frye (T1) Black Frog Complex Frye (T1) Frye (T1) From the standard of the standard						Sandpoint side of crest 1 medivac for possible spinal	
Silms Nez Perce NF 6,000 acres Benes (T2) Total Personnel: 499 Benes (T2) And 1 T1 Heli Total Personnel: 499 Benes (T2) Total Personnel: 499 Benes (T2) Benes (T2) And 1 T1 Heli Total Personnel: 499 Benes (T2) Benes (T2) And 1 T1 Heli Torews Benes (T2) And 1 T1 Heli Total Personnel: 499 Benes (T2) Benes (T2) And 1 T1 Heli Total Personnel: 499 Benes (T2) Benes (Taxiba north flank moving west and north smoke in draws Crews disengaged in Div. A due to extreme fire behavior - control lines probably lost Progress continues in Div. B and Div. Dense probably lost Benes (T2) Benes	4	Idaho Panhandle NF 12 nautical miles NE of Wallace, ID	Gray (T2)	■ T1 or 2 Heli for	■ None	consumption Spotting with several major runs	
6 HCWN (3) Lost Trail Pass Ski Predicted high winds did not	5	Nez Perce NF	Mortier (T1) – transitioning today	and 1 T1 Heli	timbered acres within selected alternative along with anadromous fish stream Historic cabin, lookout, and Wild and Scenic River campgrounds 30-year research project in Horse Creek Structures and improvements within	 Significant increase in fire activity with major crown runs on south and east flank More activity on north flank moving west and north Group torching with visible heat and smoke in draws Crews disengaged in Div. A due to extreme fire behavior – control lines probably lost Progress continues in Div. B and Div D Excellent progress on machine line along Horse Ridge Public meeting Tues night in Elk City with approx. 20 people; County Commissioners from Idaho County, ID visited fire camp Tues. Priority given to anchoring North and West flanks Major run up drainage is imminent should a wind event occur without 	
The transportation of the transport of the transport of the terminal of the transport of th	6	Black Frog Complex Salmon/Challis NF	Frye (T1) Total Personnel: 819				

	Bitterroot NF Beaverhead Deerlodge NF 7,500 acres Frog Pond – 2,091 acres Blackwall - 4,442 acres		National Freparedness L	■ TES habitat ■ Roadless, scenic and historic trails, historic cabins and developed recreation sites ■ Hwy 93 and 43	 Continuing to find numerous spot fires outside of the perimeter Individual/group torching with more fire activity in ground fuels Excellent progress on southern, western and northern flanks of Frog Pond and on north, west, and east flanks of Blackwall Numerous cabins/sites being outfitted with structural protection Five crews spiked Wed night on Frog Pond Community meeting in Wisdom went well Amending Blackwall WFSA Managed vehicle access on Hwy 93 from Lost Trail Pass to Gibbonsville from 0600-2100; closed to public vehicle access 2100-0600 Hwy 43 from Lost Trail Pass east is open
7	Hidden Lake Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF 3,500 acres	Chrisman (T2) Total Personnel: 168	■ SOF3/STCR (for T3 team) ■ FSC3/TIME (for T3 Team)		 75% containment – no perimeter expansion Predicted winds did occur Eastern front became more active due to weather conditions – held in check with helicopter bucket work Planning transition to T3 at 0600 Saturday No accidents
8	Big Creek Bitterroot National Forest 1,339 acres	Kearns (T3) Total Personnel: 187	■ Palm IR Flight		 80% containment Need public assurance of sporadic interior burning Some torching in interior Mop-up to continue Plans to demob ICP begun
9	WFU's				■ Wood Hump – BRF10 acres ■ Upper Twin – SBW10 (inactive)

Northern Rockies Preparedness Level = 5 National Preparedness Level = 5

Little Salmon Creek Complex Flathead National Forest Bob Marshall Wilderness 1,800 acres Pagoda (120 acres) Little Salmon (1680 acres)	Wirt (FUM) Cook (FUMT) Working on long term assessment Total Personnel: 14	■ T3 Heli	 Cultural and administrative sites 2 pack bridges 	 Independent tree torching, creeping and smoldering Wrapping cabins and barns at Black Bear Admin site and Mud Lake Lookout Escort visitors through South Fork Flathead River corridor Cook assisting Wirt in development of Stage III Assessment
Shasta Nez Perce National Forest Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness 139 acres	Bonefeld (FUMT) Total Personnel: 8	■ None	Historic structures at McConnell L.O., Elk Summit, Fish Cr. Cabins, Grave Pk. L.O., Bear Mtn. L.O., Dablo Mtn. L.O.	 Active ground fire w/ isolated torching Also monitoring the Pinchot Fire, 69 acres

New Fires

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Teams

Team	Incident	Mob Date	14-Day	Closeout	Available	Remarks
Benes (2)	Slims	7/16/03	7/30/03	8/1 1200		Extending 2 days
Chrisman (2)	Hidden Lake	7/19/03	8/02/03	8/02 1500	8/06 0700	Closeout @ S&R bldg in Dillon
Sandman (2)	Ross Creek	7/26/03	8/02/03			Reassigned from Wedge Canyon
Stam (1)	Robert	7/21/03	8/03/03			
Bennett (1)	Wedge Canyon	7/21/03	8/04/03			
Cook (FUMT)	Little Salmon Cr. Complex	7/22/03	8/05/03			Reassigned from Trapper Cr.
Frye (1)	Black Frog Complex	7/23/03	8/06/03			
Bonefeld (FUMT)	Shasta	7/23/03	8/06/03			
Raley (1)	Trapper Creek Complex	7/24/03	8/07/03			

Northern Rockies Preparedness Level = 5 National Preparedness Level = 5

Mann (AC)	Flathead Area Commmand	7/25/03	8/08/03		
Kechter (2)	Hunt Creek	7/28/03	8/11/03		
Mortier (T1)	Slims	7/29/03	8/12/03		
Gray (2)	Toboggan	7/31/03	8/14/03		
Rath (FUMT)				8/4/03	R & R
Swope (2)				Yes	

Contained Fires

Fire Name	Date Contained	Acres	Date Controlled
Dwyer	7/31/03	400	
Flannigan	7/30/03	190	
Deer Creek	7/30/03	85	
Amethyst	7/28/03	315	
Slim Sam	7/26/03	134	7/26/03
Missouri Breaks Complex	7/25/03	130,927	7/27/03
Long Mountain	7/25/03	160	
Kelsey	7/25/03	100	7/26/03
Wheathead	7/23/03	2,000	7/24/03
Indian Spring	7/23/03	606	7/26/03
Mickey Butte	7/21/03	3,350	
Box Canyon	7/17/03	161	7/18/03
Jimtown	7/17/03	1,061	7/18/03
Dixon	7/06/03	590	7/14/03